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Georgia Southern Examines the Association between Arthritis and Depression

December 2, 2015



Obesity and arthritis are leading chronic conditions, but comorbidity of these conditions and their interaction leading to depression have not been fully investigated. The purpose of this study was to determine the degree to which excess body weight effect-modifies the relationship between arthritis and depressive symptoms.

“Addressing obesity is challenging in itself as it requires substantial behavior change. Adding barriers, like arthritis, to physical activity can compound the problem and cycle of inactivity, weight gain, and depression.”

The association between depression and arthritis was not significant among healthy weight women, but significant among overweight and obese women. The intensifying effect from excessive body weight on the association between arthritis and depression was less salient among men than women. The study concluded that the association between arthritis and depression is intensified significantly by increased body weight, in particular, among women.

[“The association between arthritis and depression is intensified by excessive body weight: Findings from a US national survey, 2005-2012”](#) is published in Obesity Research & Clinical Practice.

Maria Politis, alumni of the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University (JPHCOPH) was the lead author. Krys Johnson, alumni, Dr. Andrew Hansen, Assistant Professor of Community Health Behavior and Education, Dr. Kelly Sullivan and Dr. Jian Zhang, Assistant Professors of Epidemiology, all at the JPHCOPH were co-authors.

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Georgia Southern Assesses the Needs of Children in a Former Slave Community

December 2, 2015



The overall purpose of this community needs assessment was to explore the perceptions of health and educational needs among youth residing in a rural Georgia community, document existing assets that could be utilized to meet those needs, and to identify socioeconomic barriers and facilitators in health education.

Several health issues were highlighted by the Willow Hill/Portal Georgia community members, including teachers, parents, youth and Willow Hill Heritage and Renaissance Center board members. Some of the health issues identified by youth in the community were low levels of physical activity, obesity, diabetes, lack of healthy food choices, and access to

health care services. Including the issues identified by youth, the parents, teachers and board members identified additional health issues in the community such as asthma, hygiene and lack of dental and eye care facilities.

Overall, there is a need for better infrastructure and awareness among community members. Utilizing identified assets, including active community leaders, involved faith-based organizations, commitment of community members, presence of land resources, and commitment to physical activity and sports, could modify the current community landscape.

[“The Willow Hill Community Health Assessment: Assessing the Needs of Children in a Former Slave Community,”](#) was published in the Journal of Community Health.

Dr. Moya Alfonso, Associate Professor of community health behavior and education (CHBE) at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University (JPHCOPH) was lead author. Ms. Gayle Jackson and Mr. Alvin Jackson of the Willow Hill Heritage and Renaissance Center, Inc., Ms. DeShannon Hardy and Ms. Akarti Gupta, DrPH in CHBE students at JPHCOPH were co-authors.

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Georgia Southern Compares Providers' Perceptions of Challenges and Facilitators to Disability Services

December 2, 2015



The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore rural/urban differences in service providers' perceptions of challenges and facilitators to services for children with special health care needs (CSHN) and their families in southeast Georgia.

Service providers discussed a variety of challenges to accessing services related to socioeconomic status and the transition out of the school system. Urban and rural service providers' perceptions were similar overall, with the exception of lack of transportation and access to a variety of services in rural area. Service providers overcome challenges through identifying parents' needs and limitations and

adapting service provision. Some of the facilitators mentioned by both urban and rural service providers are availability of transportation and resources.

[“It All goes Back to the Services”: A Rural/Urban comparison of Service Providers' Perceptions of Challenges and Facilitators to Disability Services,](#)” was published in the Open Journal of Preventive Medicine.

Dr. Moya Alfonso, Associate Professor of community health behavior and education (CHBE) at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University (JPHCOPH) was lead author. Dr. Ashley Walker, Associate Professor of CHBE at JPHCOPH, Ms. Akрати Gupta, DrPH in CHBE student at JPHCOPH, Dr. Joseph Telfair, Department Chair of CHBE and Environmental Health Sciences at JPHCOPH, and Dr. Gavin Colquitt, Associate Professor of Health and Physical Education were co-authors.

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